



October 09, 2003

Dear Friends of the 29th Senate District:

The month of October is set between two significant occasions. Last month we remembered September 11, 2001, the awful terrorist attacks and perhaps the greatest challenge to this country in the new century. Next month we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day on November 27, one of my favorite holidays and a celebration of family and country. Amidst all the challenges we face it is so important to remember the blessings we enjoy. At times life seems to be filled with this constant tension between challenges and blessings. We face these struggles in our community, with family issues, job layoffs, program cuts, hectic schedules, just to name a few. As we work to improve our lives, I pray that your challenges will be lighter and that we will all remember the gifts we are blessed with.

Speaking of challenges and blessings, following are a few highlights from the State Capitol over the last couple of weeks. I am blessed and honored to serve as your State Senator.

Sincerely,

Bill Hardiman

**SENATOR HARDIMAN INTRODUCES RESOLUTION THAT SUPPORTS CREATING
AN OFFICE OF FAITH BASED INITIATIVES IN MICHIGAN**

Recently Senator Hardiman introduced Senate Resolution 139 (SR139) expressing support for the creation of an Office of Faith Based Initiative in the State of Michigan.

Michigan has been blessed by a commitment of helping individuals, families, and communities who have not fully shared in America's prosperity. Despite efforts from federal and state governments to battle social distress, too many of our neighbors still suffer from poverty and despair. An Office of Faith Based Initiative located here in Michigan would help implement real programs and strengthen our families and communities.

Currently there are more than \$65 billion in federal grant opportunities from multiple federal agencies. President Bush is calling on each state to assist in these efforts by creating an office to the faith-based community. The biggest problem that faces these faith communities when applying for federal funds is the discouragement during a convoluted process. SR 139 was referred to the Families and Human Service Committee for consideration.

MARRIAGE DEFINED BY AMENDMENT

State lawmakers announced at a press conference on October 2, 2003 a proposed amendment to the state's constitution. If approved, the amendment would bar out-of-state courts from influencing Michigan's Defense of Marriage Act.

This proposal allows Michigan voters the chance to protect marriages and our state's laws from judicial decrees outside of Michigan. Current Michigan law stipulates that marriage is valid only if the union is between one man and one woman. But other states and countries have or are considering legalizing marriages between gays, lesbians, bisexuals and others who are not heterosexual.

The amendment would offer Michigan's law the strongest possible protection against legal attacks from court decisions in jurisdictions other than Michigan. With this amendment, Michigan voters will have the opportunity to define the concept of marriage as a covenant between a man and woman. Strong marriages are the foundation for strong families and communities. This resolution will help protect the sanctity of marriage.

MERIT AWARD SCHOLARSHIP PROMISE KEPT

To keep the promise of the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship for eligible college freshmen, the Senate took up legislation to extend the deadline until November 15 this year for reporting eligibility.

Senate Bill 701 extends the date by which a college freshman must certify his or her Merit Award score from September 15 to November 15 for this year only. The extension is necessary because of the delay in certified results from the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). We promised these scholarships to our students and we should honor that commitment. Michigan students need and deserve their hard earned scholarships.

MICHIGAN SENATE CREATES THE LEGAL BIRTH DEFINITION ACT

The Michigan Senate passed Senate Bill 395, creating the Legal Birth Definition Act. The bill establishes that legal birth (when legal personhood and rights commence for a human being) is at the point when any part of the live child has been delivered outside the mother's body and demonstrates a detectable heartbeat, evidence of breathing, or evidence of spontaneous movement.

A majority of Representatives and Senators voting in favor of Senate Bill 395 reflect the will and conscience of the people of Michigan. The legislation, in effect, will prevent partial birth abortions from taking place, a procedure in which a live human being is destroyed when the child is partially out of the mother's body.

In Roe vs. Wade and the legal decisions that followed it, the U.S. Supreme Court established that a fully born child is afforded full constitutional rights, and that a child within his or her mother is not a legally-protected person. However, no court has ever sought to define the term “unborn” or bar states from defining “born.” Senate Bill 395 clarifies this ambiguity, establishing a bright line between when pregnancy ends and birth begins. SB 395 now heads to the Governor for consideration.

SENATOR HARDIMAN WILL RETURN 3% OF HIS SALARY IN FISCAL YEAR 2004

Pointing out that most workers have seen a loss or stagnation of income in the past year, Senator Hardiman will return 3 percent of his pay to the state starting October 1, 2003.

“I believe it is important to show leadership in both the good times and the bad,” said Hardiman. “I know that this recession has been difficult for many people in communities across the state. In addition to job losses and plant closings, we’ve had to cut many important services. My prayers go out for all those who have been adversely affected by this economic downturn,” he concluded.

There is hope for a brighter tomorrow. While we still hear of job losses and plant closings, economists say that we have turned the corner to economic recovery.

SENATOR HARDIMAN RECEIVES “CHAMPIONS FOR THE FAMILY” AWARD

At the Michigan Family Forum’s Annual Fall Banquet in Grand Rapids, Senator Hardiman was honored for his active involvement in the community over the years. Senator Hardiman received a “Champions for the Family Award” recognizing his role in creating Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids, a grass roots, community-based organization that encourages and empowers couples for life-long healthy marriages and raises the standard of two-parent families. Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids has gained national attention and accomplishes its goals through the Community Marriage Policy, programming, and public awareness.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Hardiman Herald by Senator Bill Hardiman is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of his activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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